Coming Way Far-Away from Would-Be Ecomonics : The Outsidedness of Logics : On Going "Beyond the Pale of the Human"?

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Coming Way Far-Away From Would-Be Economics : The Outsidedness of Logics

Nagahara Research Project

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CONTENTS

Introduction & Acknowledgements

1　本論集は、法政大学比較経済研究所の補助（2007 年度法政大学競争的資金獲得研究助成金）によって、2007 年 12 月 13 日から 14 日に法政大学ボアソナード・タワーで開催された〈The Outsides of What looks like an Elegant Circle: Economics and Its Residue〉と題された Workshop で読まれた論攷を集めたものである。またこの論集には、Workshop には参加されなかった Timothy Murphy 氏が、本プロジェクトへの共感を示され、論攷を寄せてくださった。
2　Workshop では、Tomiko Yoda (Duke University)が佐藤良一教授（法政大学経済学部）とともに司会の労を執ってくださるとともに、Mark Driscoll (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)が Kenneth Surin 教授への Discussant として参加してくださった。
3　〈経済学理論の外部〉を探るという本論集に込められた企図は、2008 年度法政大学競争的資金獲得研究助成金の補助によってより深化され、2009 年 1 月に行われた Robert Brenner (UCLA)および Duncan Foley (New School for Social Research)へのインタビューへと繋がれている（両氏のインタビューは現在編集中であり、比較経済研究所のサイトへアップする予定である）。
末尾になるが、比較経済研究所の前所長・菊池道樹教授および現所長・絵所秀紀教授に感謝する。両氏の助力がなければ本論集は完成し得なかった。また比較経済研究所の家村真名氏と山家歩さん（法政大学社会学部）には煩瑣な依頼に快く応えていただいた。感謝する。

Chapter 2 ON GOING "BEYOND THE PALE OF THE HUMAN"?

Ken Surin

Introductory

It is no surprise that most theories of liberation are replete with references to subjects, subjectivities, identities, actors, agents, and their cognates. It would seem, furthermore, that no version of marxism or socialism can get by without an anthropology, or some account of the human, that furnishes a sense of the place of humankind in the several orders (including nature) in which the beings designated as 'human' are able to function. I assume that this theory of liberation must hinge on an ontology whose premises are at once materialist (i.e. having as its primary, though not necessarily sole, focus the myriad forms and outcomes of human activity, with an emphasis on social struggles) and immanentist (i.e. eschewing any appeal to forces and entities which rely fundamentally on supranatural principles for their being and activity). The problem here with any anthropology or vision of the human is that it will probably rest on assumptions that have been powerfully challenged in recent decades by a widely accepted thinking which purports to move thought beyond the so-called 'age of Man'. It will be necessary therefore for a theory of liberation to engage with this strand of post-anthropological thought.

I shall also assume that a politics of liberation for today has to be premised on an acceptance of the death of a previous kind of politics, that is, the politics of representation that began roughly with the American and the French Revolutions of the eighteenth century. Concomitantly with the general withering away of this representational politics, a process that began with the political upheavals of the late 1960s, has been the demise of the subject of this representational politics.

Michel Foucault was perhaps the first philosopher to make explicit the connection between liberation as a theoretical model and liberation as a set of practices (it should be stressed that Foucault made this distinction between the model and these practices so that their inherent connectedness could be maintained all the more rigorously); and even more importantly, he insisted that any elaboration of the practices involved here has to be safeguarded from a tacitly or explicitly accepted conception of human nature that guides the investigation without itself being scrutinized. Foucault is worth quoting at length on this:

> I've always been a little distrustful of the general theme of liberation, to the extent that, if one does not treat it with a certain number of safeguards and within certain limits, there is a danger that it will refer back to the idea that there does exist a nature or a human foundation which, as a result of a certain number of historical, social or economic processes, found itself concealed, alienated or imprisoned in and by some repressive mechanism.... I don't think that this is a theme which can be admitted without rigorous examination. I do not mean to say that liberation or such and such a form of liberation does not exist. When a colonial people tries to free itself of its colonizer, that is truly an act of liberation, in the strict sense of the word. But as we also know, that in this extremely precise example, this act of liberation is not sufficient to establish the practices of liberty that later on will be necessary for this people, this society and these individuals to decide upon receivable or acceptable forms of their existence or political society. That is why I insist on the practices of freedom rather than on the processes which indeed have their place, but which by themselves, do not seem to me to be able to decide all the practical forms of liberty.[1]

[1] See Foucault, 'The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom: an Interview with Michel Foucault on January 20, 1984', conducted by Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, Helmut Becker, and Alfredo Gomez-Müller, and trans by J.D. Gauthier, S.J., in James Bernauer and David Rasmussen, eds., *The Final Foucault* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1988), 1-20, quotation from 2-3. Foucault's insistence that neither ideology nor repression can account for the

The event of liberation requires for its continued effectiveness and institutionalization a quite specific form of engagement with that society's characteristic modes for orchestrating power and authority. How these flows of power promote or impede the processes of liberation depends crucially on how the subject of liberation is constituted, and vice versa, and the identification of the subject of liberation with a certain form of the human is one that definitely needs to be considered (here using some of Foucault's formulations as a starting-point).

While Nietzsche was of course the first to pronounce the 'death of Man', a 'death' he regarded as the obverse and necessary concomitant of the 'death of God', Foucault is rightly acknowledged as the thinker who more than any other has cast the notion of the 'death of Man' as a philosopheme of epochal significance. In *Les mots et les choses* Foucault denounced 'the anthropological sleep' which ensued when, in the Modern Age prevailing from the early nineteenth century onwards, Man was elevated into the governing principle of thought. The 'death of Man', the ending of the anthropological torpor, thus heralds for Foucault the 'unfolding of a space in which it is once more possible to think'.[2] The 'death of Man' is thus explicitly associated by Foucault with the onset of the *epistéme* taking over from the Modern Age. This *epistéme*, it could be called the post-contemporary *epistéme*, is one in which beings do not approximate to or depart from perfect forms (as they did in the classical *epistéme*), nor are they epistemically recalcitrant (as they were in the modern *epistéme*, when the discourses of knowledge and truth had to be created in order to subdue and overcome this noetic and linguistic recalcitrance on the part of the human subject, rendering it knowable and 'consistent' in spite of this constitutive recalcitrance). Instead, the current *epistéme* views beings as ensembles of forces arranged algorithmically, with no center of consciousness or agency being posited as the transcendental fulcrum enabling and justifying moral and noetic activity. The 'unlimited finity' that marks these configurations of forces allows a 'finite number of components [to yield] a practically unlimited diversity of combinations'.[3] Recursiveness in the mode of an 'unlimited finite' is thus 'emblematically' the *modus operandi* of the epoch, our epoch, that has succeeded modernity in the eyes of many.

Foucault had of course a narrative purporting to account for the displacement or supersession of modernity along with its pivotal creation, the figure of Man. In Foucault's famous image, Man would be erased in the way that a wave washes away the drawing of a face at the edge of the sea. Moreover, as he saw it, of the three components of the anthropological triad – *life, labor,* and *language* – it would be language that would pave the way for the *epistéme* that

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blocking of this impetus towards freedom is the gist of this passage – for Foucault the primary obstacle to liberation arises from the 'normalization' of the forms of power that stand in its way, so that, concomitantly, those flows of power which run counter to the ruling order are effectively neutralized or diverted to other enterprises where they pose no threat to our rulers.

[2] See Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977). According to Foucault, there have been three *epistémes* or historical formations. In the ***classical*** *epistéme*, which came to an end in the European eighteenth century, *infinity* and *perfection* were the primary forces that shaped human beings. Beings have forms which they instantiate, and it is the task of science to provide a cartography of these forms, a systematic cartography whose governing principle is that of the encyclopedia or treatise. In the ***modern*** *epistéme*, which reached a point of culmination in the European nineteenth century, *finitude* subtends a space of contiguous domains termed *life, labor,* and *language* by Foucault, and here 'Man' emerges in his own right (as opposed to being a derivation of a perfect being or being itself). In the modern ep *epistéme* we become the subject and object of our own understanding, but this understanding is always provisional and incomplete, always confronted by an irreducible epistemic recalcitrance (hence the importance for this *epistéme* of the power-knowledge nexus, so brilliantly analyzed by Foucault). In the ***current*** *or* ***post-contemporary*** *epistéme* – whose onset was heralded by Nietzsche, but which is still for Foucault an *epistéme* of the future – *finitude* (understood typically as empirical constraint), is displaced by a ceaseless flux of forces and their mutations, operating primarily at the level of the bios, a flux that Foucault's interpreter Gilles Deleuze calls an 'unlimited finity' (*fini-illimité)*. See Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Sean Hand, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 131.

[3] See Deleuze, *Foucault*, 131.

superseded modernity and Man.[4] Man, Foucault thought, would be undone or overcome by the 'enigmatic and precarious being' of the word, i.e. by language. Here, as Deleuze has argued, Foucault got it wrong, or at least he was somewhat off track: as Foucault himself came subsequently to acknowledge when he started to identify the notion of biopower, which affirms that the practices and forms shaping the new *epistéme* are arising not so much in the area of language, as in those of life and labor.[5] Deleuze's position on the practices of the emerging post-contemporary dispensation is clear from the following quotation:

> The forces within man enter into a relation with forces from the outside, those of silicon which supersedes carbon, or genetic components which supersede the organism, or agrammaticialities which supersede the signifier. In each case we must study the operations of the superfold, of which the 'double helix' is the best known example. What is the superman? It is the formal compound of the forces within man and these new forces. It is the form that results from a new relation between forces. Man tends to free life, labour and language *within himself*.[6]

In other words: there is now an 'exteriority' to the human because the human itself now interacts in all kinds of novel and historically unprecedented ways with other assemblages of forces, ways that entail for Foucault and Deleuze a decisive supersession of the human itself.

The Parahuman

It is vital that we be cautious about all such pronouncements about the character of epochal shifts and transformations, of the spirit of this or that age, etc., even if they come from Foucault or Deleuze or Hegel or whoever – after all, we have just seen that even Foucault lived long enough to know that he was not right about the centrality of language and the emergence of the post-contemporary *epistéme*. But let us accept Deleuze's assumption that the new practices that have emerged, and are still emerging, in the domains of life and labor are clearly significant for any understanding of these putative post-contemporary knowledges and powers. Equipped with this assumption, Deleuze concludes that the onset of the post-contemporary *epistéme* is to be identified with the emergence of a 'superman' (though perhaps 'parahuman' is the more appropriate way of rendering this term). To quote Deleuze:

> The superman ... is the man who is even in charge of the animals (a code that can capture fragments from other codes, as in the new schemata of lateral or retrograde). It is man in charge of the very rocks, or inorganic matter (the domain of silicon). It is man in charge of the being of language (that formless, 'mute, unsignifying region where language can find its freedom' even from whatever it has to say). As Foucault would say, the superman is much less than the disappearance of living men, and much more than a change of concept: it is the advent of a new form that is neither God nor

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4 See Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 304-5. For Man as a drawing on the sand, see 387.

5 Paul Rabinow, in commenting on Deleuze's interpretation of Foucault, has suggested that Foucault changed his mind after the publication of *The Order of Things*, and abandoned his earlier view that the practices of the new *epistéme* were emerging in the domain of language. See Rabinow, 'Artificiality and Enlightenment: From Sociobiology to Biosociality', in Jonathan Crary and Sanford Kwinter, eds., *Incorporations*, (New York: Zone Books, 1992), 236. I am indebted to Rabinow's essay for many formulations in this part of the chapter. Foucault had by this point started his suggestive reflections on the biopolitical that were to inspire Deleuze and Guattari, Hardt and Negri, and Agamben (to name a few), and the notion of the 'post-human' now has to be grasped through an interpretation of the biopolitical for Deleuze and Guattari, if not Hardt and Negri, as well as Agamben. For Foucault on biopower, see his 'The Birth of Biopolitics', in Foucault, *Ethics (Subjectivity and Truth): The Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, Volume 1*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: New Press, 1994), 73-9.

6 Deleuze, *Foucault*,132. Italics as in original.

man and which, it is hoped, will not prove worse than its two previous forms.[7]

The end of 'the anthropological slumber' that defined the now superseded Modern Age therefore offers us the possibility of 'a new form that is neither God nor man'. The threshold from which this new form emerges is associated by Foucault and Deleuze (who basically interprets Foucault at this point) with epochal transformations in the domains of labor and life. These transformations have an irreducible technological dimension (Heidegger was perhaps the first to register the metaphysical implications of this shift), but they are also ontological and epistemological at the same time, and collectively they banish any 'foundational' appeals to teleology, to reason, to natures and essences, to subjectivity and intersubjectivity. Such appeals Foucault regarded as the very stuff of the 'anthropological age', and the end of this age is for him coterminous with the demise of the project of epistemic and metaphysical grounding, the search for 'foundations' as it is sometimes called, so that the death of Man is necessarily accompanied by the death of anthropological metaphysics and the theory of (human, and thus divine) judgment. And since the fundamental undertaking for the Modern Age was to find solutions to the problems arising from the project of metaphysical and epistemic grounding, the solutions to the problems of our age, the post-contemporary *epistéme*, are not to be found in the problems posed for a now bygone age like the Modern Age.[8] But what comes after this Modern Age, now that the project of this foundational grounding has been forever superseded?

Metaphysics and epistemology in the traditional sense are defined by the triad that constitutes the so-called transcendental field – that is, *subject*, *object*, and *consciousness* – and are both effectively terminated by the demise of the age of Man. According to the narrative extending from Kant to Husserl and Sartre, a narrative dominated by the imperatives of this anthropologism, consciousness, as a transcendental, can manifest itself only when one of its counterpart transcendentals, the subject, is able to reflect it by referring it to the third member of this triad of transcendentals, namely, the object. Consciousness is thus coextensive with the transcendental field, and becomes manifest only when it is revealed by the activity of the subject in this relation to the object. As transcendent, the subject and the object are necessarily outside the domain of immanence, and the subject as portrayed by this philosophical narrative becomes universal subject, just as the object becomes object in general, so that immanence is distorted by having always to be posited as a mere reflex or epiphenomenon of the transcendent. Immanence ends up being defined and contained by a universal subject that is the a priori basis of the synthesis of phenomena, or by an object in general which unites a priori the field of experience. Hence the strange paradox of an anthropology, whose *raison d'etre* would seem on the face of it to be immanence and not transcendence, having instead transcendence and not immanence as its unavoidable axiomatic presupposition. This anthropology, and the metaphysics and epistemology powerfully sustained by it, having broken the back of immanence, are thus in the end no more than a form of dedivinized theology, and Foucault and Deleuze therefore effectively confirm Nietzsche's insight that God and Man have each to be discarded with the other.[9] The

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7 Deleuze, *Foucault*,132. The embedded quotation is from *The Order of Things*, 383.

8 On this aspect of Foucault's thinking see the illuminating essay by Paul Veyne, 'The Final Foucault and His Ethics', trans. Catherine Porter and Arnold I. Davidson, in Davidson, ed., *Foucault and his Interlocutors* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 225-33. To quote Veyne:

> The course of history does not include eternal problems, problems of essences or of dialectics; it only offers valorizations that differ from one culture to another and even from one individual to another, valorizations that, as Foucault was fond of saying, are neither true nor false: they are, that's all, and each individual is the patriot of his or her own values. (226)

9 The position on transcendence and immanence formulated in this paragraph replicates Deleuze's account in 'Immanence: A Life', in his collection *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (New York: MIT Press, 2001), 25-33.

reinstatement of the field of immanence, so that transcendence now becomes a function of it (and not vice-versa), will therefore necessitate the abandonment of anthropology. When this move is made, the transcendental field still exists, but it can only be grasped in and through immanence, and not *subject*, *object*, and *consciousness* constituted as the age-old transcendentals. There is, as was noted in the previous chapter, a distinction, at once important and impossible to overlook, between transcendence and *the* transcendent, and it could be suggested by our critics that *subject*, *object*, and *consciousness* only require *a* transcendence (which is compatible with an ontological immanence) and not *the* transcendent (which is obviously incompatible with the immanent). The appropriate response to this suggestion, however, is that the notions *subject*, *object*, and *consciousness* are themselves secularized versions of concepts that were initially based on the metaphysical domain of the transcendent. The *subjectum* of modern epistemology and ethics is an essential derivative of the medieval *subjectus* (as Etienne Balibar and others have pointed out), and the fundamental impetus of any thinking after the epoch of modernity has been to show that these particular notions are irremovably connected to the transcendent, and as such do not have the kind of basic commensurability with the immanent that a rigorous immanentism imposes on its defining metaphysical principles. If this line of argument is accepted, the question arises whether there are any forms of thought and practice not connected in regard to their origination with the transcendent (as *subject*, *object*, and *consciousness* are)? What, in other words, would it be to view the metaphysical or ontological constitution of cultural and social formations in terms of the field of pure immanence, as opposed to that of an anthropology predicated on the above-mentioned triad of transcendents?

As has been noted, the ontological constitution of social and cultural formations is typically delineated in terms of either the universal subject and its concomitant intersubjectivity (e.g. Rousseau's account of the general will, Habermas's ideal speech communities, and so on) or the general object (e.g. sensation or emotions or the passions and the pleasantness or unpleasantness thereof, as in Hume and Bentham, and that which confers utility, as in the empiricist or utilitarian traditions – but then this sensation, etc., is only an abstraction, necessarily arbitrary, of the flow of absolute consciousness, as Bergson and Deleuze point out). That is, this ontological constitution of the social and the cultural, even when one is talking of such basic phenomena as 'sensation' or 'sense data', is already imbued with the remnants of the transcendent in the problematic sense just outlined.[10]

It is also the case that social and cultural formations owe their existence and functions to what Deleuze calls accords or 'concerts'.[11] These accords are act-principles which provide conditions of possibility for the conjugation of all manner of events, personages, processes, movements, institutions, and so forth, in this way making it possible for the resultant assemblage or configuration to become an integrated formation. Capitalism is a good example of precisely such an accord, or rather, as an axiomatics (to use again the terminology of Deleuze and Guattari) it is more like an accord of accords, a 'meta-accord', which links, for instance, the accord governing the relationship in South Africa that exists between labor (black gold-miners), capitalists (the corporations owning the mines), and a commodity (the raw gold deposits extracted by the black miners) with the accord that governs a relationship in Switzerland between another labor-force (workers in a Swiss watch factory), other capitalists (the owners of the watch factory), and a commodity (an expensive gold watch), which in turn is linked with another accord governing a relationship in London or Atlanta between that commodity (the

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[10] Deleuze is of course the noted proponent of a 'transcendental empiricism', that is, he accounts for the transcendental field not in terms of notions of subject and self, but, in a way that is indebted to Bergson, as 'a pure immediate consciousness with neither object nor self, as movement that neither begins nor ends…'. See 'Immanence: A Life', 26.

[11] See Deleuze, *The Fold*, 130ff.

Swiss gold watch), still other capitalists (the owners of the British or American jewelry store selling the watch), and consumers (the buyers of the expensive Swiss watches). The apparently disparate zones of accumulation and production represented by the gold mine just outside Johannesburg, the watch factory in Zürich, and the jewelry store in London or Atlanta are rendered 'harmonious' by the higher-level accord or 'concert' created by capital, even though the lower-level accords which govern the regimes of accumulation prevailing at each of these zones remain (qua lower-level accords) disconnected from each other. Each lower-level accord retains its relative autonomy, and requires the meta-accord established by capital to bring it into concert with the other accords to which it is connected. The 'concerto grosso' orchestrated by the meta-accord enables the lower-level accords to function independently of each other while still expressing the same world, the world of the current system of accumulation and production. This meta-accord allows capital to operate as a system of vastly ramified but still interconnected functions, linking peoples, places, infrastructures and transportation systems, technologies, raw materials and finished products, corporations, governments, and so on. Capital, as Deleuze and Guattari, Fredric Jameson, and Slavoj Žižek have rightly suggested, is the only (false) universal left.

Accords and Immanence

Accords, as was pointed out above, are set-up by implementing selection criteria, i.e. inclusion or exclusion criteria, for the accord in question. These criteria also determine with which other possible or actual accords a particular accord will be compatible (or incompatible) with. What seems to be occurring today, with the problematization or breakdown of the previously regnant ways of organizing the transcendental field (the now well-known several crises of the universal subject, the breakdown of the general object and its supersession by newer categories ('flows', 'forces', 'spectacles', etc.) which make possible radically new combinatorial systems involving myriad concatenations of *part*-objects), is that such selection criteria, which may or may not be explicitly formulated, are weakening or disappearing altogether. The selection criteria assign privileges of rank and order between disparate entities, assemblages of entities, relative speeds of movement, and spatial configurations. Their loss or attenuation make dissonances and contradictions difficult to resolve, and, conversely, divergences become easier to affirm. Without any really viable 'transcendental' accords to discipline them conceptually or narratively, events, objects (both whole and part), and personages can now be assigned simultaneously to several divergent and even incompossible series. Thus, for example, Lautréamont's somewhat derisive definition of reality ('the chance encounter between a sewing-machine and an umbrella on a dissecting table'), a definition that would have prompted some bewilderment on the part of a Kant or John Dewey, is now virtually a commonplace after all the culturally sanctioned opportunities many of us have had to negotiate the several artistic avant-gardes, novelists like Borges and Georges Perec, cyberpunk, the new generation of video games, various atonal and fusion musical genres, the architectures of Gehry and Eisenman, and so on. The ontologies associated with the writings of Deleuze, Baudrillard, Virilio, et alia, are designed precisely to give conceptual expression to the aleatory, the haphazard, and the unanticipated, that is, they permit definitions of 'reality' in ways fundamentally accordant with the spirit of Lautréamont's seemingly bizarre characterization of it.

These 'chaotic' accords or quasi-accords, all eschewing the transcendent, are now well-positioned in our culture, and they have precipitated the collapse of a number of once deeply entrenched distinctions serving as the basis for this culture's self-understanding: the demarcations between public and private, inside and outside, before and after, and so on, have all become difficult, if not impossible, to maintain. In the process, however, accords thus severed from any conditions capable of guaranteeing their stability (the primary function of the

transcendental field) likewise become 'impossible'. We may be living in worlds, or reading texts and listening to scripts, no longer predicated on any need to secure and sustain accords – these are radically immanent worlds characterized by sheer variation and multiplicity; worlds in which new powers of figuration are emerging, and which partake of a neo-Baroque more 'truly' Baroque than its predecessor.[12] This is the world in which allegory comes into its own, having supplanted narrative as the primary instrument for the transcoding that according to Fredric Jameson is the necessary prolepsis for any theoretical and practical grasp of its otherwise effaced emancipatory possibilities and potentialities. Or put in terms of the argument advanced in this chapter, with the 'systemic' loss of accords sustained by an intrinsic relation to a transcendental field, those belonging to this culture now experience the world, their communal affiliations, etc., in terms that are shot through with allegory. Our very criteria of belonging to this culture are inextricably wedded to such allegorizing propensities. In which case, to say 'I belong' is to say and do something that is necessarily emblematic and evocative of something else, something very different from what would be the case if there were some kind of necessity or requirement that shielded my (or your) 'belonging' from the pressures of an inescapable allegorization or metaphoricity.

When, for instance, the right-wing American evangelical leader Jerry Falwell identified one of the 'teletubbies' as 'gay' he was at one level being the unreconstructed queer-basher he has been for a long time. But at another level, something else was happening: by making 'queerness' the property of a transhuman or parahuman being like a 'teletubby', Falwell was, in spite of himself, making or tacitly acknowledging a point with some pretty interesting implications for someone invested in the project of a 'gay liberation'. If 'being queer' is a property that can be transposed into a domain that is trans- or parahuman like that of the telletubbies, then it is possible that 'queerness' is *everywhere* (and quite literally so); in which case it quite literally spills across barriers between species (real and imaginary), and is therefore actually and potentially *unbounded* and *uncontainable*. Of course it is exactly this scenario of an undelimitable 'queerness' which evokes in Falwell and his supporters so much anxiety and anger. But the possibility of an unbounded and uncontainable 'queerness' – Falwell's great but for him dreaded discovery, if it could be put this way – is precisely the expression of a utopian-heterotopian possibility for someone who is queer. If 'being queer' is a property that can be distributed in at least two divergent series – 'human' on the one hand, 'teletubby' on the other – then who knows what or who else can be queer, perhaps the cherubim and seraphim in heaven, or maybe for some even Jesus himself.... Placing the property 'being queer' in two divergent series therefore enables proponents of the project of a gay liberation to become the unintended addressees of a subversive subtext lodged in Falwell's otherwise risible pronouncements on the erotic dispositions of the teletubbies. Shorn of the reference to American popular culture, the example of Falwell and the telletubbies illustrates the point being made by Foucault in his readings of ancient Greek sexuality and by Deleuze and Guattari in their Reichian-inflected reading of Freud's notion of a polymorphous perversity.[13]

In this epoch of the demise of the transcendental field buttressed by the metaphysico-anthropological framework criticized by Foucault and Deleuze, the matter of conceiving (let alone assigning or determining) identities becomes inherently problematic. For conceiving of identities is an undertaking that hinges crucially on the retention of the *concept* (as opposed to the *description*, which can be more easily propelled into this or that divergent series). The specification of an identity requires that the identity in question be determinate with

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12 This of course is the tenor of Deleuze's argument in *The Fold*.

13 For Foucault's reclaiming of the Greek precept that the object or goal of what we today call the sexual relationship is pleasure with the other regardless of the biological sex of that other, see his 'The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom', 1-9. For Deleuze and Guattari's Reichian conception of polymorphous perversity, see *Anti-Oedipus*, 118-19.

regard to a concept or amalgam of concepts ('being American', 'being a communist', 'being an academic', or whatever), a concept whose range of applicability is regulated by certain criteria of belonging. And if such criteria have no ('transcendental') accords to motivate and underpin them, then identities can always be read emblematically and inscriptively, that is, allegorically. So where does this leave us?

It may be that we would better off if we discarded the notion of an *identity* in favor of another quite different notion, namely, that of a *singularity*. Intrinsic to the notion of a singularity is the principle that a common or shared property cannot serve as the basis of the individuation of *X* or *Y* from all that is *not-X* or *not-Y*: if I share the property of being over six feet tall with someone else, then that property cannot, in and of itself, serve to individuate either me or that person from each other. A singularity, the *being-X* of *X* that makes *X* different from all that is *not-X*, cannot therefore unite *X* with anything else. Precisely the opposite: *X* is a singularity because it is not united with anything else by virtue of an essence or a common or shared nature. A singularity is a thing with all its properties, and although some commonality may still pertain to this thing, that commonality is indifferent to it qua singularity. So, of course, Thomas Jefferson will have the property 'being American' in common with other people, many millions of them in fact. But a singularity is determined only through its relation to the totality of its possibilities, and it is the totality of possibilities named 'Thomas Jefferson' that constitutes Thomas Jefferson as an absolute singularity – if another being had each and every one of the possibilities whose totality constituted and thus individuated Jefferson, then he would perforce be indistinguishable from Jefferson. He would be the same being or person.

An epoch in which 'transcendental' accords do not give us our worlds or our texts is one in which our criteria of belonging will always be subject to a kind of chaotic motion. The notion of an identity, no matter how much one acknowledges that identities in principle shift or fragment or are subject in their constitution to a whole range of irreducible contingencies, involves an unavoidable denial of this knowledge: for an identity, as Hegel saw, is always to be specified by recourse to the dialectic of identity and difference, in other words, it requires the principle of dialectical negation for its operation, so that when I say 'I am British' this carries with it the entailment that I am not French and not American and not Nigerian, and so forth. A core of essentialism therefore resides in the very notion of an identity: if one is an *X*, then one is an *X* if and only if there is a determinate sense in which that what one is, is precisely a negation of all that is *not-X* (at any rate this has to be the case as long as one remains an *X*). Identities are never independent of the subjectivity and the objectivity of 'what is the case', and so they always refer back to a transcendental field that is not, and indeed never can be, constituted in terms of immanence.

It is a truism, albeit one that is scarcely acknowledged and done justice to, that before one can be a subject one has to have a life.[14] A life which resides in all the moments that a subject is immersed in and which lived objects order and move around, moments (moments are events and singularities) which actualize themselves in subjects and objects and which become the states of living things. The subject, according to this account, is the 'point of view' taken on these moments, it is the singularity which consists of the conjoined perspectives on the singularities that make up its life. Here is Deleuze's fundamental statement on this characterization of the subject as a concatenation of 'affects, intensities, experiences, experiments':

> ... it doesn't at all come with seeing yourself as an ego or a person or a subject. Individuals only find a real name for themselves in the harshest exercise in depersonalization, by opening themselves up to the multiplicities everywhere within

[14] In what follows I adhere closely to the line of thought developed by Deleuze in 'Immanence', 5.

> them, to the intensities running through them.... One becomes a set of liberated singularities, words, names, fingernails, things, animals, little events: quite the reverse of a celebrity.[15]

The subject posited by metaphysico-anthropology is thus too abstract to be the subject of a life: instead of being the assembled point of view on the myriad singularities that make up a life, it is the a priori, and thus necessarily abstract and abstracted, condition for the perceiving, experiencing, etc., of these singularities. The upshot is that the singularities are voided of life and vitality, inasmuch as they become mere functions of the subjectivity that registers them, rather than requiring the subject to be given its proper place, i.e. as that which exists fleetingly and concretely between these moments, between these singularities. The universal subject, to put it succinctly, is simply inadequate to the manifold vagaries, the mish-mash of practices and experiences that make up life.

The ending of modernity's 'anthropological slumber' therefore coincides with the time in which it becomes possible to acknowledge that there is no truth of history or philosophy except the one which declares that there is no longer an essential nature or transcendent reason to be invoked as the *raison d'etre* for our struggles for a better world. Modern truth and reason and Man are now dead (Man being understood as a conceptual figure, not a biological being), say Nietzsche, Foucault, and Deleuze, just as classical truth and reason had to make way for their modern successors.[16] It will perhaps now be possible to take as the launching-point for our struggles Foucault's haunting question – '*d'où vient que la vérité soit si peu vraie?'*. 'Why is there so little truth in truth?' Meaning not that there is no such thing as the will to truth, but that this will to truth is always the resultant of a certain activation of the will to power, and that the former has force only insofar as the latter gives it whatever force it has come to possess. But what would such a will to power be for those who are involved in the quest for liberation? The subject of the ethics and epistemology of the previous epoch was necessarily abstracted from the situations in which the will to power exercised itself – the being of this transcendental subject had to be posited in advance of any disposition of power, since the subject was precisely the pivot from which the will was deployed. [17] To provide a critique of this metaphysico-anthropological subject is relatively easy (the gist of this critique being standard fare for any of the structuralisms and poststructuralisms, as well as psychoanalytic theory); the crucial question is what, if anything, we put in its place.

Part Objects and Desubjectivation

Even if the so-called unitary experiencing subject and the unitary general object of experience are dispensed with, the realities of the condition called 'experiencing' and the standpoints of the one who undertakes this 'experiencing' remain as brute and as yet unanalyzed phenomena, and thus have still to be reckoned with conceptually by the theorist of liberation. If we accept the basic assumption of psychoanalytic theory that experience is governed by a structure put in place by one's very early identifications with the various elements (or singularities) of an internal and an external reality, then experience has to be seen as the resultant of the functioning of this structure and the array of identifications that lies at its heart. In their account of the nature and scope of these identifications, conducted by them as part of their explication of their fundamental notion 'desire', Deleuze and Guattari, to whose account of the beyond-human we have so far been indebted, were impressed by the work of the British

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15 See Deleuze, 'Letter to a Harsh Critic', in his *Negotiations*, 6-7.

16 On this question, see Veyne, 'The Final Foucault', 231.

17 As Deleuze points out, to understand the deployment of the will in this way ('before I can will, I have to be constituted in my transcendental being') is precisely to misunderstand Nietzsche. On this see Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 6ff and 49ff.

'object relations' school of psychoanalysis, and in particular the writings of D.W. Winnicott and W.R. Bion.[18]

Object relations theory in the versions of Winnicott and Bion takes our primary identifications to be formed not by direct psychic linkages to anatomical features (and their surrogates), no matter how fantasized, such as the breast of the mother, genitalia, and so forth, but rather by identifications with the plethora of functions associated with these and a whole range of other objects. Thus, in the object relations description of our identifications, it is emphasized that identifications are not with some object per se (the mother's breast being the object favored by a more traditional psychoanalysis), but rather with the several functions served by the object in question (such as giving, loving, hating, fearing (as in the anxiety that the beloved object is somehow poisonous to the one assimilating it), punishing, and so forth). Deleuze and Guattari generalize this insight in their account of desire, and maintain that this decisive shift on the part of the object relations school makes identification a more visibly political undertaking. After all, giving, loving, hating, fearing, punishing, and so forth, are more overtly political in their orientation than anything conveyed, say, by the mere expression 'identification involving the breast of the mother'. If there is an overarching injunction in Deleuze and Guattari, it is not so much the one that politics needs to attend to objects, as the one that what is crucially determinative here is rather the set of functions undertaken by the objects in question. An object in itself means nothing unless we are able to ascertain whether it invokes in us the specific responses of love, hate, fear, anxiety, indifference, sadness, joy, and so on. The question 'What is *X*?' is answerable only if the questions 'how' and 'why' with regard to *X* are posed and answered, since the nature of *X* is linked, inextricably, to its functionality (i.e. the 'how' and 'why' questions). This 'object relations' psychoanalytic insight resonates with the philosophical positions of Spinoza and Nietzsche, for whom a being is always an amalgam of the forces that it receives and transmits, and the ensuing states which it then happens to be in.[19] Once this principle is accepted, the theory that derives from it can only be a theory of desubjectivation, that is, it will be a theory that discounts from the beginning the notion of a sovereign subject able to legislate for the constitution of consciousness and the judgments delivered by that consciousness. But what does desubjectivation actually involve?

At the heart of the notion of desubjectivation is the claim that the relation between consciousness and object is not mediated by the sovereign subject or ego, but that, rather, the flux of experience itself affects in very significant ways the constitution of the ego or subject. So what is the subject? The ego or subject, from the object relations standpoint glossed here, is instead more plausibly to be viewed as a viewpoint, or series of viewpoints, on this flux, in a way or ways that allow the flux itself to affect directly the nature of the viewpoints that are in the process of being constituted even as they respond reciprocally to the contents of this flux. The subject as seen here the outcome of a certain constellation of the ego or self with the always variable objects to which the subject is related. If there is no essential or eternal structure to the

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[18] See Deleuze, 'Nomad Thought', in his *Desert Islands and Other Texts*, 252-61; and *Anti-Oedipus*, 19, note, where reference is made to Bion's *Elements of Psycho-analysis* (London: Heinemann, 1963). For commentary see Jay R. Greenberg and Stephen A. Mitchell, *Object Relations in PsychoanalyticTheory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983). Greenberg and Mitchell do not however discuss Bion. For discussion of Bion, see the intellectual biography by Gérard Bléandonu, *Wilfred Bion: His Life and Works 1897-1979*, trans. Claire Pajaczkowska (New York: Guilford Press, 1994).

[19] Perhaps an excellent illustration of this point is Bion's suggestion that the difference between courage (running towards the enemy) and cowardice (running away from the enemy) in war was often simply the direction in which you ran. Bion was a much decorated veteran of the First World War, and his point, certainly made somewhat tongue in cheek, indicates that the virtue 'courage' and the vice 'cowardice' are tied to physical dispositions ('running' in this case) whose meaning can only be determined if the functions (moving away from or moving towards a perceived enemy) and context (in this case a battle) of these dispositions are taken into account. For this reference to Bion's remark, see Adam Phillips, 'Malingering: Review of Peter Barham, ***Forgotten Lunatics of the Great War***', *London Review of Books* 27:5 (2005), 20-1.

subject, then the viewpoint, no matter how solidified or fluid, taken on the flow of experience can be established in a variety of ways not governed by any kind of absolute and overarching normativity. This being so, the perspectival-subject can have defining affinities with a whole range of beings, including non-human animals and divine beings, and of course those animal-beings designated as 'human'. Or it could occupy a position in which the predicates typically identified as 'human' and 'divine' cease to be operative (the philosophical scenario envisaged by Deleuze). It is not necessary at this stage to endorse the position taken by Deleuze. Suffice it to say, though, that the kind of being permitted by this understanding of the 'parahuman' is compatible with Deleuze's position, even if it is not entailed or required by it. It will all depend on what the 'human' and the 'divine' enable us to achieve. If they have failed, and Deleuze is convinced they have failed, then by all means let us find more enabling alternatives. We in the west have no clear sense of what these alternatives might be. But outside the west, conceptions of liberation not necessarily tied to the 'human' and the 'divine' have long existed. It is not obvious that they are any more inferior to those that have prevailed in the cultures of the west. At the same time, of course, it is not evident that conceptions that bypass the 'human' and the 'divine' are intrinsically human. But now may be the time to give them a try.